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ABSTRACT

A study is described which used student compositions in grades 1-12 to examine expressed values over a 10-year period in the James A. Garfield School District in Garrettsville, Ohio. In four sample years, 1,500 students were assigned open-ended essay topics without knowing the writing was part of a research study. Results were analyzed to determine changes in values during the 10 years and to see if students in different grades have different values. Findings showed that students' values change as they grow older, and that boys and girls in the same grade have similar values. Grade-level values are not static--sixth graders in one year have different values from sixth graders in another year. Because these findings were derived from data taken from one school district, they are not generalizable elsewhere. Additional topics for future research might include (1) relationship between national economic or social fluctuations and students' values or (2) congruence among community values, students' expressed values, and the school's stated philosophy. (Author/AV)

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EXPRESSED VALUES: A Structural Model and
A Report of a Ten Year Study with Elementary and Secondary Students

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A Summary Report

EXPRESSED VALUES: A Structural Model and

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Society is expecting the schools to assume more and more of the solutions to problems or concerns formerly handled by the church (moral education, values), the home (drug abuse, sex education), or by citizens of good will (equity in housing or in economic opportunity). More than a quarter of a century ago Childs observed that

No human group would ever bother to found and maintain a system of schools were it not concerned to make of its children something other than they would become if left to themselves and their surroundings. . . . Hence the curriculum of the school is an index to the values of the particular human group that forms the school.¹

Behind this statement lies an important question:

Are specific schools successful in terms of their students' achievement and values in relation to the stated philosophy, goals, and curriculum of the school?

This question, however, can only be answered individually about a specific school or district.

An attempt to develop a study which would provide answers to the question above for a given school district resulted in the identification of two prior questions which had to be considered:

- (1) How may the diverse values expressed in the American cultures be identified and codified for the purpose of research?
- (2) What are the values expressed by a group of students over a ten year period? Is there a developmental pattern in expressed values paralleling findings of Piaget² or Kohlberg³ in the areas of moral judgment?

The findings for the first question have been published: the reports include the

identification and codification of the range of values expressed in the United States, the search for and subsequent design of an appropriate instrument, and the validation of that instrument.⁴ Recently Reighard has prepared and validated A Manual for Analysis and Research in Expressed Values giving detailed procedures for the use of the instrument.⁵ This paper reports on findings from the second cluster of questions.

The Problem: What values are expressed by school-age youth over a ten year period and what, if any, changes in expressed values occur during that time? What, if any, differences in values expressed exist between age groups at any given time and what changes, if any, occur for a given group as it grows older?

Population and Location: In four sample years over a ten year period 1500 children and youth in grades 1-12 formed the population for this study. They comprised the total student body in the James A. Garfield School District in Garrettsville, Ohio.⁶ The district is a consolidation of three communities located at the center of the Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown triangle. The communities may be considered a microcosm of exurban life in the United States.

Limitations: Since the data in this report are from one exurban school district, we are not suggesting that they are generalizable elsewhere. They are descriptive of these particular students in this place over a ten year period.

The Data: Teachers in the participating schools routinely assigned open-ended topics for in-class writing on a specified day in all the elementary classes and in the English classes in junior and senior high schools, with no mention to the students that the writing was part of a research study. A group of teachers worded each of the selected all-school topics with appropriate directions for the various grade levels.

Sampling: From each of four writing occasions over the ten year period, we selected randomly fifteen papers written by girls and fifteen written by boys at each grade level; we retained the compositions until the end of the tenth year when trained scorers (with interscorer reliability established) identified the values expressed in the compositions and recorded them on forms for later statistical treatment and analysis.

The Instrument: The Rubric for Expressed Values, Third Edition (REV III) is a twenty cell instrument based upon the theories of Spindler that the values of any culture may be described in principal categories; and that these values are in movement between traditional and emergent positions, with the emergent positions of one generation becoming the traditional values of the next.⁷

For REV III we identified a number of sub-categories in each of Spindler's major divisions. These sub-categories appear in the Personal Values Inventory (PVI), Figure 1.

Figure 1. A Personal Values Inventory

Suggestion: Complete each section, outlining your personal beliefs, values.
(Begin each section with a verb, with I as the understood subject.)

A. ETHICAL CODE

Religion
Morality
Nature
Nation/State
Other

B. CONCEPT OF SUCCESS

Work
Education
Symbols of Success
Other

C. CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHERS

Self-concept
Concept of family
Relationship to friends
Relationship to others

D. TIME ORIENTATION

Within own life-time
Within history
After-life concepts

REV III provides a framework for describing the ways these values are expressed throughout a continuum from extremely conservative to extremely liberal positions. Each of the five positions identified on the continuum is descriptive but not exhaustive of values frequently and characteristically expressed by people of those five persuasions: (1) Refluent (reactionary), (2) Traditional, (3) Transitional/Relative, (4) Integrative, and (5) Transformative (revolutionary). We selected the continuum as an appropriate form because it can accommodate easily-comprehended judgment-free statements.

Through the process of identification of a range of values expressed in contemporary literature, the mass media, or from other public forums, we developed the scale REV III and validated it through established procedures.⁸ A study of the scale and the Manual for Analysis and Research in Expressed Values, along with several short practice sessions enables the scorers to establish interscorer reliability⁹ and to use REV III as a summary guide. Subjects of the research neither see nor use the scale itself.

Values expressed by individuals in open-ended essays, in printed documents, in group discussion, or in small group situations may be recorded by the use of tally marks directly on the scale, in an open grid corresponding to the scale, or directly on Fortran Statement sheets. REV III appears in Figure 2.

/Figure 2 here/

The Findings: Four specific hypotheses were tested. Since each of them involved a test for independence, chi square was selected as the appropriate statistical tool. The hypotheses and the findings related to each are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The distribution by category of expressed values is independent of time for a given grade level.

That is, 1st - 3rd grade children will have the same categorical distribution of expressed values at the first writing time as will a comparable group at the second, third or fourth writing time. Figure 3 shows the distributions of expressed values for the 1st to 3rd graders at each of the four writing periods.

A RUBRIC OF VALUES EXPRESSED IN THE UNITED STATES (REV III)

REFLUENT

ETHICAL CODE	--MORAL INFLEXIBILITY
Religion	.believes in vengeful God
	.venerates own religious leaders
Morality	.considers self morally incorrupt
	.defends vigorously self-rights
Nature	.tolerates no extravagance
Patriotism	.expresses super-patriotism
	.adulates hero figures of same race
Other	.considers military service an honor
CONCEPT OF SUCCESS	--POWER
Work	.takes pride in hard work, being busy
	.considers "self-made" man the ideal
Education	.believes schools should maintain best of the past, teach for basic skills and values of past
Symbols of Success	.bargains from position of strength
Other	.speaks publicly through official spokesman .uses inflammatory oration to win support, polarize
CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHERS	--EGOCENTRISM
Self-concept	.considers self, others "like me" to be right
	.offers simplistic solutions to complex problems
Concept of family	.believes family should be male dominated
	.insists women's place in the home; children should be seen, not heard
Relationship to Friends	.enjoys friends of same sex and beliefs, and family groups
Relationship to Others	.joins groups which have power goals .strives for control of others --perceives as morally corrupt; respects none different from self
TIME ORIENTATION	--PAST
Within own life-time	.values past as model for present and future
	.believes situation now is bad because of changes and will result in punishment or disaster
Within history	.yearns to return to past glory
After-life concepts	.believes in spiritual immortality

*Cf. four principal categories with those outlined in theoretical construct of George Spindler, "Education in a Transforming American Culture." Harvard Educational Review XXV, 1955, 145-156

TRADITIONAL

ETHICAL CODE--PURITANISM

Religion	.professes faith in God
	.believes in original sin, expresses penitence
Morality	.subscribes to strict code of behavior
	.shows guilt for perceived transgressions
Nature	.strives for practicality, practices thrift
	.enjoys solitude, nature
Patriotism	.sees nature as something to be conquered for personal benefit
Other	.expresses patriotism, nationalism
	.considers military service honorable obligation

CONCEPT OF SUCCESS

--WORK

Work	.respects hard work, physical or mental
	.trusts hard work to bring success, victory
Education	.spurns resting on past glory
	.believes schooling route to upward mobility
Symbols of Success	.wants children to have improved education
	.acquired property, family, tangible goods
Other	.values symbols of freedom
	.trusts melting pot idea

CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHER --INDIVIDUALISM

Self-concept	.believes self is basis for success
	.values rights and freedoms for those "like me"
Concept of family	.admires, respects elders, family
	.demands respect for authority, age
	.forms friendships with families "like mine"
Relationship to Friends	.admires those of higher status
	.believes others "like me" can succeed
Relationship to Others	.supports successful aesthetic pursuits

TIME ORIENTATION

--FUTURE

Within own life-time	.believes preparing for future most important consideration
Within history	.practices delayed gratification
	.sees nation at pinnacle of success, leader of world community
After-life concepts	.believes in spiritual immortality

TRANSITIONAL

ETHICAL CODE

--MORAL RELATIVISM

Religion	.sees universe as purposeless
	.accepts alternatives to idea of single living God
Morality	.rejects absolutes
	.practices situation ethics
Nature	.sanctions expediency
	.may exploit nature for personal joy, profit
Patriotism	.believes military service useful if benefits accrue
	.values others for usefulness to state, nation
Other	

CONCEPT OF SUCCESS

--SOCIABILITY

Work	.behaves as if ends justify means
	.believes success dependent on personal contacts
Education	.innovates within system
	.uses education as route to specific goal
Symbols of Success	.accepts education as "credential"
	.shows materialistic view of success
Other	.may practice conspicuous consumption
	.believes money can solve any problem

CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHERS

--CONFORMITY

Self-concept	.views self as clever, strives to be number one
	.exercises free will, yet
Concept of family	.conforms to mores of chosen group
	.may place career contacts above family
Relationship to Friends	.uses influence of family for professional gain
	.shows loyalty to friends as long as it is expedient
Relationship to Others	.tolerates divergent beliefs if group harmony prevails
	.uses others for status, gain
	.may suspect loners
	.disdains ideas of outsiders

TIME ORIENTATION

--PRESENT

Within own life-time	.content with present
	.gratifies selfish whims
Within history	.indulges self hedonistically
	.sees nation and time as number one
After-life concepts	
	.fears death as finality

INTEGRATIVE

ETHICAL CODE	--Moral Congruence
Religion	.professes faith in BEING (mortal or immortal)
Morality	.strives for policies congruent with values
Nature	.rejects incongruent expediencies
Patriotism	.avoids violence, aggression
Other	.works to establish- maintain positive balance in environment
	.expresses world (non-national) concern
	.demonstrates for beliefs, works for reform
	.believes military service should be optional
CONCEPT OF SUCCESS	--ACTIVISM
Work	.analyzes problems, considers alternatives
Education	.establishes priorities for action
Symbols of Success	.seeks change for common good rather than personal gain
Other	.views education as life-long learning
	.disciplines self to become, remain competent
	.achieves success in accomplishing humanitarian goals
	.may spurn traditional symbols--property, wealth
CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHERS	--ACTUALIZATION: SELF and OTHERS
Self-concept	.values individuality within framework of common good, can accept divergent views
Concept of family	.values positive relationships
Relationship to Friends	.shares property, decision making
Relationship to Others	.enlarges family to extended family (professional)
	.enjoys friends of all ages, backgrounds
	.values people over things, strives for shared decisions, compensates for inequalities
	.fosters creativity, individuality
TIME ORIENTATION	--UNIVERSALITY
Within own life-time	.safeguards future for others
Within history	.looks forward to nation in true global community of partners
After-life concepts	.believes personal lifetime contribution is immortality

TRANSFORMATIONAL

ETHICAL CODE

--ANARCHY

Religion	.believes person is own god
	.will not compromise
Morality	.rejects values of societal majority
	.believes completely in <u>cause</u> --usually revolutionaly
Nature	.believes environment hostile because it thwarts <u>cause</u>
Patriotism	.may disregard nature; <u>or</u> show great concern
	.sees <u>cause</u> as only thing worthy of fealty
Other	.believes national military service used as punishment

CONCEPT OF SUCCESS

--OVERTHROW

Work	.works for ends which justify any means
	.uses inflammatory oration to win support, polarize
Education	.works for education if seen as expedient
	.shops around for "supermarket education"
Symbols of Success	.sees success in demise of current institutions, policies
Other	.demands excessive power to compensate, achieve equality

CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHERS

--ABSOLUTE EQUALITY

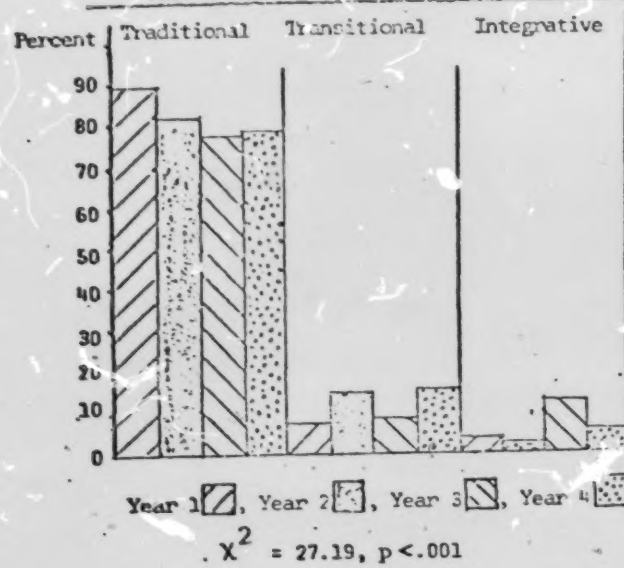
Self-concept	.behaves as if unisex were ideal
	.gives self to cause, submits to extremes in discipline
Concept of family	.promotes outward display of scorn for social mores
	.may reject natural family
Relationship to Friends	.accepts new family within cause
	.joins groups embracing revolution
Relationship to Others	.demands strong allegiance
	.scorns others not sympathetic to cause

TIME ORIENTATION

--NOW!

Within own life-time	.believes future should be NOW
	.unwilling to wait for change
Within history	.believes any change improvement (if not regressive)
	.has no plan beyond change
After-life concepts	.sees adopting cause only hope for future
	thinks immortality in person's mind

FIGURE 3. Within-level stability of expressed values across time (Grades 1,2,3)

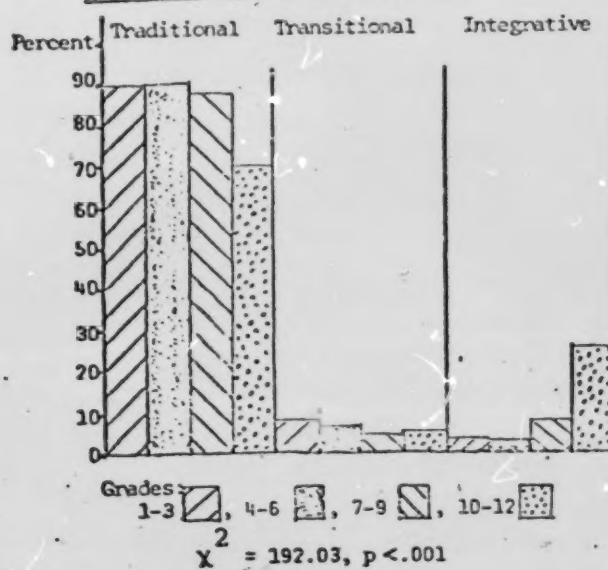


The significant chi square resulted in a rejection of the hypothesis of independence. The same result occurred with the other grade groups. There is a change in expressed values across time within grade groups.

Hypothesis 2: The categorical distribution of expressed values is independent of grade level at any given time.

That is, the distribution of expressed values for the primary grades should follow the same pattern as those for the intermediate grades, the junior high grades, and the senior high grades at each writing. Figure 4 shows the distributions of expressed values by grade levels at the first writing.

FIGURE 4. Similarity of expressed values across grade levels (Year 1)

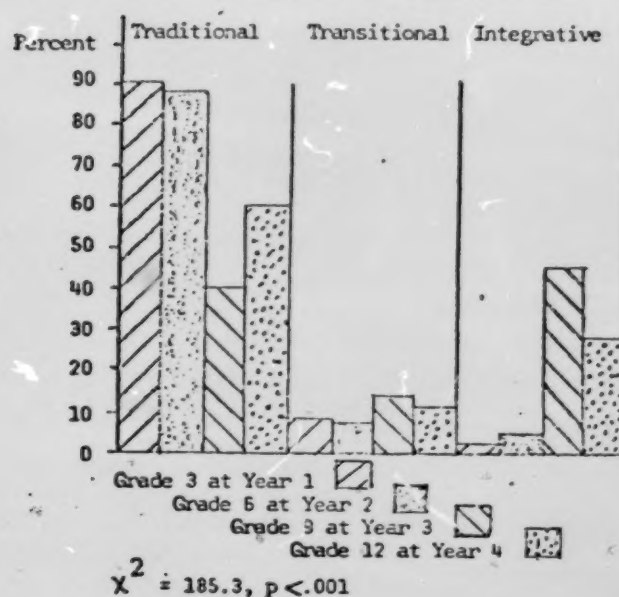


The chi square was significant here and at each of the other writing sessions. Thus, the hypothesis of independence was rejected. Different grade groups do express differing patterns of values.

Hypothesis 3: The distribution of expressed values for a given group will be independent of the time of the writing.

That is, a given group of students will have a similar distribution of expressed values at grade 3, grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12. Figure 5 shows the distributions of expressed values for one such group of students as they progressed through the grades.

FIGURE 5. Stability of expressed values across time for the same group



A significant chi square was found for this group as well as for each of the other two groups in the schools at all four of the writing sample times (i. e., grades 1, 4, 7, 10, and grades 2, 5, 8, 11). The hypothesis of independence was rejected. Children's expressed values do change as they grow older.

Hypothesis 4: The distribution of expressed values for a given grade group is independent of sex.

This hypothesis is the only one which had non-significant results. That is, the distributions of expressed values for boys and for girls were essentially the same within grade groups at each writing session.

Summary and Recommendations for Further Study: This study used student compositions in grades 1 through 12 to examine expressed values over a ten year period in a single school district. Hypotheses tested were concerned with differences between grade groups and by sex and for stability over time. Results showed that students at a given grade level at one time have different values expressions than do children at the same grade level at a different time. Similarly, students at different grade levels express differing patterns of values at

any given time. Students' expressed values also change as they grow older. At any given time, however, the expressed values of boys will follow the same pattern as the expressed values of girls at the same grade level. These findings parallel those of Piaget and Kohlberg.

A number of topics and questions for further study are immediately apparent:

- (1) Expressed values and economic or social trends: is there a relationship between the nation's economic fluctuations or social pressures and the values expressed by students?
- (2) Variations in assessing "success" in the school's students: do we wish to continue evaluating a school chiefly on the basis of students' achievements on standardized tests in specific disciplines?
- (3) Observation of informal activities (school or community) indicating students' values versus verbally expressed values in school: is there a difference between what a student says and what he does?
- (4) The community's values, the school's stated philosophy, and the students' expressed values: is there congruence?

Other areas of study might include: (1) students' expressed values in relation to time, specific curricular programs, or curricular innovations; (2) students' expressed values in free composition as opposed to prescribed topics; (3) distributions of students' expressed values in this country compared with those expressed by students in other countries; (4) relative congruence between students' expressed values and stated national, regional or local ideals as seen in the United States and various other countries.¹⁰

Footnotes

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2. Jean Piaget. The Moral Judgment of the Child. The Free Press, 1948. Also, The Origins of Intelligence in Children. The Norton Library, 1963. Also, Norma Selland. "A Study of Moral Values of Children from the Lower Elementary Grades through High School Using Children's Written Compositions over a Seven Year Span." Drake University: A Field Study, 1970. (unpublished).
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5. Ronald Reighard. "Manual for Analysis and Research in Expressed Values." Drake University, A Field Report, December 1975. (unpublished) (The Manual is available at cost from Dyer, Brooks and Reighard, College of Education, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.--\$7.00 pstpd.)
6. The study and data were made possible by the cooperation of Prudence Dyer's former colleagues, the teachers of the James A. Garfield School District, and the superintendent during those years, Orson E. Ott.
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8. Dyer, op. cit.
9. Reighard, op. cit.
10. Prudence Dyer. "Youth in Contemporary Greece: An Exploratory Study of the Expressed Values of Selected Greek Youth." Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa and the National Centre for Social Research, Athens, Greece, 1973. (mimeographed). One example of values identification, scale development, and analysis of values expressed by 1500 Greek students.